

# Beyond Cognitive Testing: Moving Forward with Implementation and Evaluation of Results in the Testing of Spanish Translations

Patricia Goerman and Herman Alvarado

U.S. Census Bureau

Presented at the QUEST workshop  
April 9–11, 2013: Washington, D.C.





*This presentation is intended to inform people about research and to encourage discussion. The views expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the U.S. Census Bureau.*



# Non-English Cognitive Testing Findings

1. Current acceptance decisions
2. Issues with adaptation
3. Possible pathways to move forward



# Non-English Cognitive Testing Findings

1. Current acceptance decisions
2. Issues with adaptation
3. Possible pathways to move forward



# Current Acceptance Decisions

- Example of American Community Survey (ACS) Spanish CATI/CAPI cognitive testing
- Types of problems found through testing
- Types of changes more easily accepted by sponsors
- Types of issues that got “shelved”



# Types of Problems found through Testing

1. Overly long, complex question structure
2. Conceptual mismatch across cultures
  - ❖ Home schooling / enseñanza en el hogar
3. Use of ambiguous terms
  - ❖ High school / escuela secundaria





# Types of Changes More Easily Accepted by Sponsors

1. Change order of clauses
2. Use different term: synonym or description, to replace confusing term
3. Add English term in parenthesis after ambiguous Spanish term
4. Add explanation of confusing concepts to optional help text

# Types of Issues that got “shelved”

- Need for adaptation, deviation from English to make sense to Spanish speakers
  - Hispanic origin question:
    - “Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or **Spanish** origin?”
- Problems found in Spanish and English
  - Other living quarters series:
    - “How is access to the sample unit achieved?”





# Non-English Cognitive Testing Findings

1. The current implementation process
2. Issues with Adaptation
3. Possible pathways to move forward



# Adaptation: one example

# ACS Plumbing question

## Original wording:

“Do you have COMPLETE plumbing facilities in this house or apartment; that is, 1) hot and cold piped water, 2) a flush toilet and 3) a bathtub or shower?”

## New wording, part 1:

“Does this unit have hot and cold running water?”



# Adaptation, continued

## Part 1 wording again:

“Does this unit have **hot and cold** running water?”

“¿Tiene esta vivienda agua por tubería  
caliente y fría?”

## Minor Changes based on cog testing:

¿Tiene esta vivienda agua **caliente y fría** por tubería ?



# Final adaptation

Addition of a new question in Puerto Rico

- 1) Does <building type> have running water?
- 2) Does <building type> have a water heater?

New questions fielded January 2013



# Non-English Cognitive Testing Findings

1. The current implementation process
2. Issues with adaptation
3. Possible pathways to move forward



# Possible pathways to move forward

- Split panel field testing:
  - Possibility of ACS Content Test,
  - Decennial language testing
- Examine data before and after minor changes to see if any impact
- Examine the one adaptation example, before and after data
- Respondent or interviewer debriefing





# Beyond Cognitive Testing: Moving Forward with Implementation and Evaluation of Results in Cognitive Testing of Spanish Translations

Patricia Goerman and Herman Alvarado,  
U.S. Census Bureau

For more information:

E-mail: [Patricia.L.Goerman@census.gov](mailto:Patricia.L.Goerman@census.gov)

